

Willing Savior

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Date: 21 August 2022

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[0 : 00] And please open your Bibles to John chapter 14. Many years ago, I read a novel by Alexander Solzhenitsyn entitled, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.

It was about a prisoner in a Siberian Stalinist labor camp back in 1951. And the novel reflects Solzhenitsyn's own experiences that he went through in Russian labor camps.

And as the title states, the whole book covered just one day in the life of Ivan Denisovich. Now, we're here in John's Gospel. There's 21 chapters on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

One third of the book covers just one day in the life of our Lord Jesus. It was his last day leading up to his death on the cross.

It's chapters 13 through 19. And surely this tells us something of the importance of our Savior's last words. To his 12, to his heavenly Father as he prays, and then the seven sayings from the cross.

[1 : 20] And our text this evening comes from that last day in the life of the Lord Jesus. He's about 12 hours away from the cross is all. It's evening.

He's alone with his disciples in the upper room. He's washed their feet. Judas has left to get the arresting mob. And now we listen in to something more of his last words with the 11 that he's had just three short years to prepare.

We begin in verse 15. He says to them, If you love me, you will obey what I command.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counselor to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.

[2 : 26] Before long, the world will not see me anymore. But you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

Then Judas, not Judas Iscariot, said, But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus replied, If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.

My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own.

They belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

[3 : 44] Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.

You heard me say, I am going away, and I am coming back to you. If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the Prince of this world is coming.

He has no hold on me. But the world must learn that I love the Father, and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

Come now, let us leave. Come now, let us leave. Where is Jesus going?

[4 : 48] Well, he's going outside the city of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley, up the Mount of Olives, to a garden spot called Gethsemane, where he knows Judas, his betrayer, will soon be there, bringing the mob and soldiers from the chief priests to arrest him.

It's an arrest that Jesus will make no attempt at all to evade or escape. And then on to his trials before the chief priests in the Sanhedrin, where again, he makes no effort to defend himself, but goes, as Isaiah had promised 700 years earlier, as a sheep, before her shearers is silent. So, he opened not his mouth. Now, on early occasions, he did open his mouth. When they brought accusations against him and tried to trip him up in some trick question, oh, he answered. And he answered with such wisdom and power that they were silenced in total defeat every time. But now, now he makes no effort for a defense in his trials. He's not even trying to get himself free. I mean, it's almost as if he was surrendering his life willingly. And indeed, that is what the scriptures tell us he was doing.

[6 : 18] He had told them earlier in John 10, verse 11, I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Have you thought that if he defended himself, as he had done earlier, that he could have got off.

But that was not the plan. That was not why he came. And so, he was, as a sheep, silent before its shears. He knows the time had come for the very thing, the very reason for which he had come into the world to do, to die on the cross for his sheep, sheep given to him before the creation of the world by his Father.

Come now. Let us leave. Here is no reluctant Savior, unwilling to go to the cross for us. When he sees the arresting mob, as he's there in Gethsemane, and it's dark, and he sees them coming with their torches and swords and spears, he doesn't hide or flee. But he goes out to meet them. And he says to them, Who is it that you want? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And he said, I am he. Or more literally, what he said was, I am.

[7 : 42] The name of Jehovah, Yahweh of the Old Testament. And when they, when he said this, they drew back and fell to the ground under the power of his word.

And so he asked them again, Who is it that you want? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. And Jesus answered, I told you, I am.

And if you're looking for me, then let these men go. He turned himself in to protect them. He was committed that we might be acquitted.

Now, it's no small encouragement to know that Jesus was not a passive victim in the events of his death. That he was somehow caught in a trap of a Judas, one of his own, that betrayed him. Of the chief priests and Pharisees who came up with lies and false charges against him. And later, the crowd that shouted for his crucifixion. And a pilot who was a man pleaser and caved in to it.

[8 : 48] No, Jesus wasn't just a passive victim. We see it here. In every move this evening, he was moving toward the cross with his face set as a flint to go to the cross.

It was love. A determined, unfailing love that took him to Calvary. But I wonder if you noticed in the reading what he said about that love.

Notice it again in verses 30 and 31. I will not speak with you much longer for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

Come now, let's go. Let's go. In other words, he's saying to them ahead of time, when you see me there on the cross, do not think that I'm there because Satan has some hold on me that I could not break.

I could not escape. No, not at all. I'm going willingly to my death. Again, he's saying the same thing. I'm doing this of my own volition.

[10 : 05] And I'm doing this to demonstrate something to the world. There is something the world must learn. Literally, the word there is no.

There is something the world needs to know. His death on the cross is to teach the world something. Something they must know. What is it?

Well, let's be clear what it's not. He does not say the world must know that I love them. Nor does he say the world must know that I love you, my disciples.

What he does say is, come on, let's go. I'm going willingly to death for the world must know that I love the Father. That I love the Father.

I wonder how often we think of Calvary as the demonstration of Christ's love for his Father. probably not enough, but here it is on the night of his betrayal, just hours away from that death that he's marching to with determined, jaw set.

[11:19] And he sets this truth before us. So let's meditate on this wondrous love of the Son for the Father demonstrated at Calvary.

Now to be clear, I'm not saying in the least that the cross does not show Jesus' love for us sinners. It does, and we've already sung of that, we've quoted scriptures already of that, and the Bible says so over and over.

But this is not one of those verses that says that. Rather, this verse is telling us that Calvary is the demonstration of his love for his Father.

and those are not at war with each other. Those are not mutually exclusive. He dies with love for sinners, but he's telling us now that he died to demonstrate his love for the Father.

The world must know it. Now, our fallen natures are so turned in on ourselves that even as Christians, we can come to the Bible and read it as if we're the centerpiece of everything that's found here.

[12:27] It's surely talking about us and we can say that about his love. But it isn't all about us. It's about God. It's about the triune God.

It's about a God of wonders, a God of glory that we should stand in awe of, a holy God who glorifies himself by saving us, sinners, and saving us through the death and life and resurrection of his own beloved Son.

But our redemption is undertaken first and foremost, not for us, but for the glory of his name, the manifestation of who he is.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. Some 40 years ago there was a song that said, I am mercenary and self-seeking through and through. I've never had a selfless thought since I was born. That's what sin has done. It's turned us in on ourselves and it can affect the way that we read the scriptures even.

[13:49] We tend to measure all things by what it means for us. But if we can this evening just take a back seat for a moment with us out of the picture, we're going to see another amazing love at Calvary.

A love of Jesus Christ for his beloved Father that makes him willing to go to the hellish death of the cross to please him, to honor him, to glorify him.

It was love. Love for the Father. For the world must know that I love the Father. So when we think of Calvary and the blood of Christ flowing down, we ought to remember that the love of Christ was flowing in two directions.

It was flowing down to us sinners, but it was also flowing upwards to his Father. And in our text tonight, that's what we're hearing of.

Calvary, the demonstration of his love for his Father. So here's the God-man, Jesus Christ, the first man to perfectly love God with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

[15:02] And precisely how is Jesus' love to the Father to be known by the world? What will the world see to know that the Father is loved by Jesus?

Well, he tells us in verse 31, the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. So the world will learn about his love for the Father by his obedience to his Father's commands.

Isn't it interesting that the manifestation of love is the same for him as it is for us? Three times in this passage we have read of it.

How is your love for God known to be real? How is it manifested? Verse 15, Jesus says, if you love me, you will keep my commands.

You will obey what I command. Verse 21, whoever has my commands and obeys them, he's the one who loves me. Verse 23, Jesus replied, if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.

[16:10] So the demands of love were no less or different for Jesus than they are for us. It's obedience to the Father's commandments that demonstrates true love.

So the whole of his life was one of obedience to his Father's commandments. obedience and his last act of life included his dying.

That too was an act of obedience out of love to his Father in heaven. John chapter 10, you can turn back to it, just a few pages.

Verses 17 and 18. Notice what Jesus says about his death. John 10, 17 and 18.

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it

up again.

[17:18] this suggestion I receive from my Father, this command I received from my Father.

The Father commanded him to go and to die and he obeyed with all of his heart and soul and mind and strength. The Apostle Paul picks up on this idea of the death of the cross being an act of obedience, doesn't he?

In Philippians 2, 6 to 8, speaking of God the Son, he says, though he was in very nature God and equal with God, he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness.

He humbled himself and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. So even the death, the last act of his life was obedience to God the Father.

So the demands of love were not less for Jesus but greater. For love demanded more of him than it ever did for us when God the Father in that eternal covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son said to the Son, you go and be damned for sinners.

[18:41] sinners. You go and purchase a people for us. Go and die the God-forsaken death under my wrath that sinners deserve to die.

And the obedient Son of God did just that. and not grudgingly but willingly. For the world must know that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me and only in that way will they know of his great love for the Father.

For the Father if love can be measured by the difficulty of the command obeyed, then here was the greatest love as it was the hardest command ever given.

This command given to God's Son goes back to that eternal covenant when the Father sent his Son on this mission to become man for us, sin for us, a curse for us, that he might redeem us and win eternal life for us.

So this command was obeyed because of his love for the Father. Now why is it so important for the world to know that Jesus' love for the Father is seen in his obedience unto the death of the cross?

[20:05] Two reasons. First of all, here is the righteousness that we sinners need for eternal life. In the Garden of Eden, God made eternal life contingent upon Adam's obedience.

Obey and live, disobey and die. And by eating the forbidden fruit, he forfeited eternal life, not only for himself, but for all his posterity that came after him, all of mankind that he was there representing.

And so he incurred the curse of death for us all. Now, rather than leaving us all to perish in a state of sin and misery, our blessed God, the Father, determined to send a redeemer.

And he sent his own son, the true and better Adam, who represented all his people and obeyed every command to win eternal life for us.

Galatians 4, 4 and 5, in the fullness of time, at just the right time, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under law, that they may receive the adoption of sons.

[21:21] So the law giver becomes the law keeper, that he might redeem us law breakers and have a righteousness to give to us that we needed to get into heaven.

Romans 5, 19, for justice through the disobedience of the one man, the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man, the many will be made righteous.

So there is the righteousness we need to get into heaven, but there's one other thing still outstanding. What about that curse that was upon us for our sin?

Yes, we needed the perfect record of righteousness, but we still have the curse of the second death due for our sins. So Jesus needed not only to live a perfect life of obedience for us, he needs also to die a death under God's curse and wrath.

for us. And what the Bible is telling us is that even his suffering the curse of death in our place was also part of his perfect obedience to the Father.

[22:29] And only by that perfect obedience do we guilty sinners have eternal life. So we trust on another person's life, not our life, but his.

We trust in his death. And that death itself, he died out of obedient love for his Father.

So this perfect obedience to the Father is the perfect righteousness that is credited to every sinner's account on the moment of saving faith. We look to Christ and what he's done for sinners at Calvary, and that faith brings to our account the perfect righteousness of Christ.

And Jesus is saying the world needs to know that there is a righteousness of God available for us sinners who have none of our own. It's found only in Jesus Christ.

And by this the world will learn that I love the Father because I do exactly what he has commanded me. So that's one reason it's so important for the world to learn.

[23 : 46] This is the only way to get to heaven. It's this obedient love that Jesus demonstrated at Calvary. But secondly, it's the perfect example of obedience that God requires of us.

And this is something too that the world needs to know. What is it that God requires of us? Well, we have his commands. And what is the summary of the law?

But that we love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Paul says in Romans 13.10 that love is the fulfillment of the law.

Love fills up every single command. And that means loving God more than we love ourselves and so if ever there's conflict between my love for God and love for me, my love for self is the one that must be denied and out of the greater love for him.

Just like a man in love wants to please his wife and serve her will. That's how Jesus lived and that's how Jesus died in loving obedience to his father.

[25 : 00] He loved the father and so he loved to do his will. His obedience was motivated by love and all of the things he did for love.

He poured out his life on Calvary to demonstrate that love for the father. He says in John 6, I've come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me and this is the will of him who sent me that of all that he has given me I should lose none.

That's what takes him to the cross. Yes, there was love for us. But he also speaks of this love for the father to please the father and his will is that I lose none that he's given me.

That was driving him. So here's something that we should learn from Calvary's cross. Our salvation is the fruit of this amazing love of the son of God for his father. And in obeying his father he did everything needed to secure our salvation.

But in saving us he was serving a higher cause. In loving us at Calvary and giving his life for us there he was expressing a higher love, a love for his heavenly father who sent him on this mission of divine love.

[26 : 23] You remember in John 11 when Jesus shows up at the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus' four days dead and when he goes out to meet Mary and talks with her and sees her grief and the grief of the Jews at Lazarus' death.

The Bible says he wept. Jesus wept. And when he did the people said behold how he loved him. His tears proved his love for Lazarus. That's what they concluded from his tears. And as we are thinking tonight of Jesus not just tears but the blood that he shed in obedience to his father, we're to say in amazement, behold how he loved him.

Behold how Jesus loved the father. That's what we're looking at. Yes, we're looking at how much he loved us but let's sit in the back seat a bit and just appreciate this love between the son and the father.

Don't you love him for his perfect love for his father? Isn't there something attractive in that that draws you in? Even though you're in the back seat and we're not even thinking about us now, we're just appreciating the love that the son has for his father.

[28 : 05] And that's the fellowship of love that this atonement has brought us into. For we now have been called into fellowship with the father and the son and the Holy Spirit and this wonderful love that flows between them and now us as well.

So let's praise him. Let's worship him tonight as we remember his death on the cross in our place. take your hymnal and sing with me number 440.

440. Fountain of never ceasing grace. That's what we're looking at. The cross is a fountain of never ceasing grace. And we sing in verse 2 to Jesus Christ.

In thee we have a righteousness by God himself approved. No flaws in it at all. the law thou perfectly obeyed that they might enter heaven.

440. Let's sing. Amen.■■■